

San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee Meeting

Thursday April 28, 2011

Hugh Burns State Building; Fresno, Calif.

1. Call to Order and Announcements at 1:01 pm

Chair Pedrozo called the meeting to order and had the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sup. Perea of Fresno County welcomed everyone to the meeting and had a round of applause for the food.

Facilitator Art Lloyd called for the roll call of members. (List Attached)

Mr. Lloyd led a memoriam of Cameron Beach, a former member of this committee, who passed on March 18. Mr. Beach was a major proponent of San Joaquin valley rail service and a major rail transit professional for Sacramento RT. Mr. Lloyd asked that the meeting being adjourned today in memory of Mr. Beach.

Mr. Abelson made a call for people to take advantage of San Joaquin service to go to Yosemite and to get together a coordinated trip of interested parties the first week in June.

2. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items Only

Bruce Jenkins, a member of RailPAC, wanted to highlight since the advent of the reservation system, noted that the Committee in the past had asked for five car consists on Friday's and Sunday's. He said that the reservation system is really not conducive to the travelling public. Lee Goldenberg, Caltrans Div. of Rail, stated it wasn't the res system, it is due to the lack of availability of rail equipment to allow for the addition of five cars. Mr. Goldenberg advised San Joaquins will have 5-car consists for the summer season, beginning Friday May 26 through Tues. Sept. 6. He advised we share the fleet with the Capitol Corridor.

Mike Barnbaum, a member of the public, submitted for review to Caltrans Div. of Rail a variation of trains 701 and 711 schedules going northbound in the morning, and trains 718 and 704 going southbound in the evening. Greg Santos, road foreman at Amtrak, stated that in order to accomplish this, we will need the availability of the

new equipment that will come in calendar year 2012 in order for Mr. Barnbaum's proposed schedule to be feasible.

Mr. Barnbaum also stated that the Sacramento RT service at Sacramento Valley Station will be unavailable for the next three weekends due to construction at the depot.

Mr. Lloyd asked Leo Hoyt, Caltrans Div. of Rail about the Comet Cars. Mr. Hoyt stated Stan Hunter has been meeting with Amtrak's officials at Amtrak's Beech Grove, Ind. Facility, about the retrofits and the compliance factors needed to renovate those cars for San Joaquin service. Mr. Hoyt predicted that the earliest we will have those cars in service is late summer 2012, per State funding issues. Mr. Hoyt stated that these are single-level cars, however, the passenger ride experience will be the same as the current bi-level California Cars currently in service throughout Northern California.

Chair Pedrozo then had everyone in attendance introduce themselves and who they represent.

3. Guest Speaker (1:35 pm)

High Speed Rail Presentation by Bart Bohn, California High-Speed Rail Authority.

Mr. Bohn works for URS Corporation, the consultant hired by CAHSRA. He does the outreach activities between Merced and Palmdale. He stated the design is 15% complete and still preliminary. He stated the alignment has not been determined at this time and keeps getting tweaked. As a result, the design of the system has to be redone when this happens. As a result, the total costs are still not known at this point.

Mr. Bohn's job is to educate the public on how high-speed rail works and operates. He stated that due to federal grants and the required local match, he stated that the Madera to Bakersfield segment will be the first part of the entire system to be built. He then stated the goal then is to connect the southern California area. Completing phase one will be the construction into downtown San Francisco.

He stated the CAHSRA already has \$5.5 billion in construction funds on hand, awaiting the final design and environmental clearances for the first part of the system. Mr. Bohn then said hopefully California will be in the running for more funds that Congress will appropriate and the FRA will be able to award. He also stated that the elevated portion between FNO and BFD will include 45 miles of structures. He did say that as the CAHSR comes into Fresno, it will come down to grade and be along the UPRR

ROW. Also noted there are a couple of station location alternatives in Fresno that the Authority is currently looking at.

In Corcoran, Mr. Bohn said that an at-grade alignment in town has been looked at, and that there are discussion regarding land preservation and alignments.

In Wasco/Shafter, there are some bypass alignments at-grade being looked at. After being elevated in Shafter, then going back down to grade at 7th Standard Road north of Bakersfield and the issues of being at-grade in BFD.

Public hearings are upcoming in Fresno and Bakersfield to comment on the enviro docs. These will be made avail online on the CAHSRA website. Hope that final enviro docs will be made avail by the end of the year, which will then lead to ROW acquisition and hope for construction to begin in late 2012.

Mr. Bohn stated that most of this project hopes to be of the design-build construction sequencing, as that is the stated policy of the CAHSRA.

Also, the \$5.5 billion in initial construction funds does not include electrification, signaling, or train set procurement.

Supervisor David Rogers asked the question of if bonds are going to be sold soon. Mr. Bohn said that the goal is to use all the Federal monies first before issuing bonds. Also, Sup. Rogers also stated that the alignment issues in Madera County are a big concern to the citizens as not to disrupt the community and asked if the authority is considering Madera County's preferred alignment. Mr. Bohn said that the Authority has not yet included Madera's preferred alignment in the enviro document, however, nothing regarding alignments has been added to the documents anywhere at this point. Mr. Bohn pointed out that AECOM, who is handling Madera County, is having public hearings for the alternatives for Madera County start up again.

Supervisor Perea stated that HSR is going to happen and that he just wanted to point out that HSR was never to be fully funded by the public, but also have a private investment. He stated that the private investment is coming from international companies, several of which have a major presence in cities such as Fresno, Bakersfield and throughout the Central Valley.

Mr. Holscher asked that once alignment has been finalized, what is the plan for those who refuse to sale. Mr. Bohn said those properties that are deemed critical to the plan will have the option of eminent domain, but there will be very generous offers of property value and that there are several owners already offering up their land now to

the Authority. Like anything, the Authority will use principles that are used by Caltrans in the same way highway projects are done.

Mr. Ableson pointed out that UPRR has a policy of no HSR alignment along any of its ROW. Mr. Bohn stated that the authority is not going to, as a matter of policy, not be in the ROW of both UPRR and BNSF, but will have to cross those ROW's in instances.

Chair Pedrozo wanted to point out that he is glad to see CAHSRA reaching out more and more to the agriculture community and that they are open to communication as have been in the past and that to use Assemblywoman Galgiani as a resource in that communication.

Larry Miller, member of the public from Fresno, asked how much is the total cost from Fresno all the way south to the terminus. Mr. Bohn responded that he did not want to guess or speculate at this point on the costs as because the Authority's design is not even near complete south of BFD.

Bob Snoddy, Kern COG Staff, gave an update on the potential of a new regional, commuter rail service in the southern San Joaquin Valley from Delano down Bakersfield and southeast to Arvin. Approx. 22 stations in between where it could serve a potential 41,800 employees at major job sites.

4. Action Items

Chair Pedrozo entertained a motion to accept the minutes of February 3, 2011. Mr. Machado highlighted a correction in his title. Moved and seconded with correction.

Angelo Lamas, member from Merced County, discussed the Gap Closure between BFD and LAX. There is a letter drafted to talk about the importance of the Gap Closure and wanting the committee to accept the letter to send to Caltrans and CAHSRA. The letter encourages using the CAHSRA alignment through the gap.

Mr. Lloyd stated that letter should address UPRR, specifically because back when SJ service started in 1974, service was supposed to be run overnight to LAX. At least to get our foot in the door, acknowledge the UPRR because right now what's holding us back right now is the lack of available equipment to do an overnight run to LAX from BFD.

Mr. Fung from LA County also pointed out that there is also a train capacity issue along the Antelope Valley Line of Metrolink as there is already a two hour time from

Lancaster down to LAX. LA County is looking into the feasibility that AVL could be sped up to a 90 minute headway due to demand from northern LA County cities.

Ms. Mortensen from San Joaquin Rail Association (ACE) highlighted that unless we get the international consortium involved in doing a separate alignment (CAHSR), we would just be spinning our wheels in getting the gap closed.

It was advised that the letter be taken back for further comment and language regarding the gap closure and revisit this at the next meeting. Anyone who has input to contact Mrs. Camacho.

5. Reports

Amtrak California/Train Operations: Mike Edwards and Greg Santos from Amtrak highlighted the On Time Performance (OTP) was for Jan. of 90.3%, Feb. it was 93.5%, and Mar. was 86.8%. A few of the major delays were due to a locomotive compressor failure on Jan 7 for 713. Also, a HEP oil failure on train 712 at Hanford. On Feb. 21, train 703 had a debris strike in Shafter when it hit an oven and punctured the fuel tank. Train 716 then tied onto train 703 and towed it back to Bakersfield.

San Joaquin Pax Services: David Nisley from Amtrak highlighted the Customer Service Index scores for the San Joaquin. The overall average score for the last quarter is 92%. The goal is 91% and the San Joaquins ranked #4 overall in the entire nation for passenger satisfaction.

Amtrak Gov't Affairs: Rob Eaton from Amtrak highlighted that Congress passed the FY11 budget for \$1.615B. There is a reduction in capital costs from FY10's budget, however, operating costs remained the same. FY12 request from Amtrak to Congress is \$2.2B.

Div of Rail Update: Mr. Hoyt updated that we got \$100M in expanding our equip fleet and that will help expand the length of our consists on the San Joaquin. Also be able to convert some of our cab cars to cab/baggage cars, which would then guarantee a dedicated cab/baggage car on every San Joaquin consist. On the funding from the State, there are no current bond sales at this point to help out on a potential match for federal funds down the road. The door repair project is moving at plan and cars are being rotated out and all the faulty doors should be done by the end of this fiscal year.

Amtrak Thruway Bus Operations: Rick Peterson from Amtrak stated we are not changing any schedules on any of the train corridors for the May 9 timetable. Changing up some of the rotation schedules on the bus route between EMT and SFC,

but no effect to any of the passengers. Full service to Yosemite for the summer resumes on May 16. Also the trip to Mammoth Lakes will resume once Tioga Pass Road reopens once the snowpack melts. Going to move the Red Bluff stop to the town transit center from its current location. Amtrak is celebrating its 40th Anniversary on May 2 and on May 4, an appreciation for all train crews and the bus company that operates in BFD. At least 350,000 pax pass thru BFD on a yearly basis. Also been working on training on the consistency standards for the last nine months with all the bus companies on contract for all the routes.

Amtrak California Marketing: Debbie Mullins from Div. of Rail first wanted to thank Shelly Chernicki and Amtrak for the Food Taste Tasting. Pointed out the new ad campaign that is going up and down the valley and that it will continue thru mid-June. At that point, market research will be done on the campaign with results hopefully in by October or November. The website focus group results should be in by July.

Mr. Goldenberg pointed out that we have had record ridership five months in a row. We are on pace to finally break one million riders and we would like to have some sort of recognition in light of this fact. Also, National Train Day is on Sat. May 7th in Martinez, with CCJPA as the host. Fresno is also hosting a Train Day event also on May 7th at the Sante Fe Depot.

6. Member Comments and Suggestions for Future Agenda Items

The next meeting will be on Thursday June 30, 2011, at a location to be determined.

Chair Pedrozo wanted to point out how dedicated the Caltrans and Amtrak personnel are and how hard they work day in and day out and asked for a round of applause.

Meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm.

GWS/gws